



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

SKOPJE • MACEDONIA



Restoration of the façade of the Painted Mosque in Tetovo



Ambassador Wohlers delivered remarks at a ceremony to highlight the successful completion of the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) grant at the Painted Mosque in Tetovo. The \$94,708 grant, which was signed in 2011, allowed for the preservation and restoration of the exterior façade of the Painted Mosque in Tetovo. Honored guests included the Minister of Culture Elizabeta Kanceska-Milevska, Mayor Sadi Bexheti, the head of the Islamic Community of Macedonia, Mr. Sulejmani Rexhepi, Mufti Alifekri Esati, and the Mosque's Imam, Mr. Baki

Kasami. This is the eleventh AFCP project in Macedonia, and the second project in Tetovo. To learn more about AFCP grants, visit: <http://eca.state.gov/cultural-heritage-center/ambassadors-fund-cultural-preservation>.

Ambassador Paul D. Wohlers
Remarks for AFCP Painted Mosque Project Completion
10 December 2012, 10:30 a.m.
Tetovo

Good morning, Minister Kanceska-Milevska, Mayor Bexheti, Mr. Sulejmani Rexhepi, Mufti Alifekri Esati, Imam Baki Kasami, honored guests, and friends. I am so pleased to be here with you all today to celebrate the completion of this important project.

On September 15, 2011 – three days after I arrived in Macedonia as the U.S. Ambassador – the Minister and I met here on this site to sign the grant to restore and preserve the façade of this beautiful and historic Painted Mosque. Fifteen months later, it is a great pleasure to come back, meet many of you again, and see the results of this important project.

I want to congratulate the Director and staff of the National Conservation Center on the beautiful results of their intensive and intricate efforts.

Their work has not only protected and preserved the remarkable artwork on the façade of this historical treasure, but they have restored these paintings to their original splendor.

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People of this country and visitors from around the world can now appreciate the superb artwork, as well as the rich cultural heritage that inspired the creation of this beautiful mosque – regardless of their religion or ethnic background.

Through our excellent collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the people of Macedonia, the U.S. Embassy in Skopje has awarded more of these grants than any other U.S. Mission in Europe. Since 2001, we have been delighted to support eleven Ambassador's Fund projects in this country, totaling well over \$1 Million dollars. The grant for this project of over \$94,000 dollars was one of the largest awarded to a project in Europe. Looking at these results on the façade of this beautiful mosque, I truly am proud that the U.S. Embassy was once again able to work with our Macedonian friends and partners on such an important endeavor.

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation was created by the U.S. Congress in 2000 to support projects which protect the rich cultural heritage of another country, in order to save these treasures for future generations from around the world, and to demonstrate our respect for that heritage. Since its creation, the Ambassadors Fund has invested \$30 Million to support almost 700 preservation projects in more than 120 developing countries.

Of those 700 projects around the world, surely none is more beautiful, more culturally significant, or a more important symbol of the rich, shared history of a country than this mosque. We at the U.S. Embassy are honored to have been a part of the efforts to protect one of Macedonia's historical treasures so that others can enjoy it, as we do today, for many, many years to come.

Thank you.